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ADVENTURES



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MARY HAD A LITTLE . . . ?—BY N. WESLEY FIRTH.

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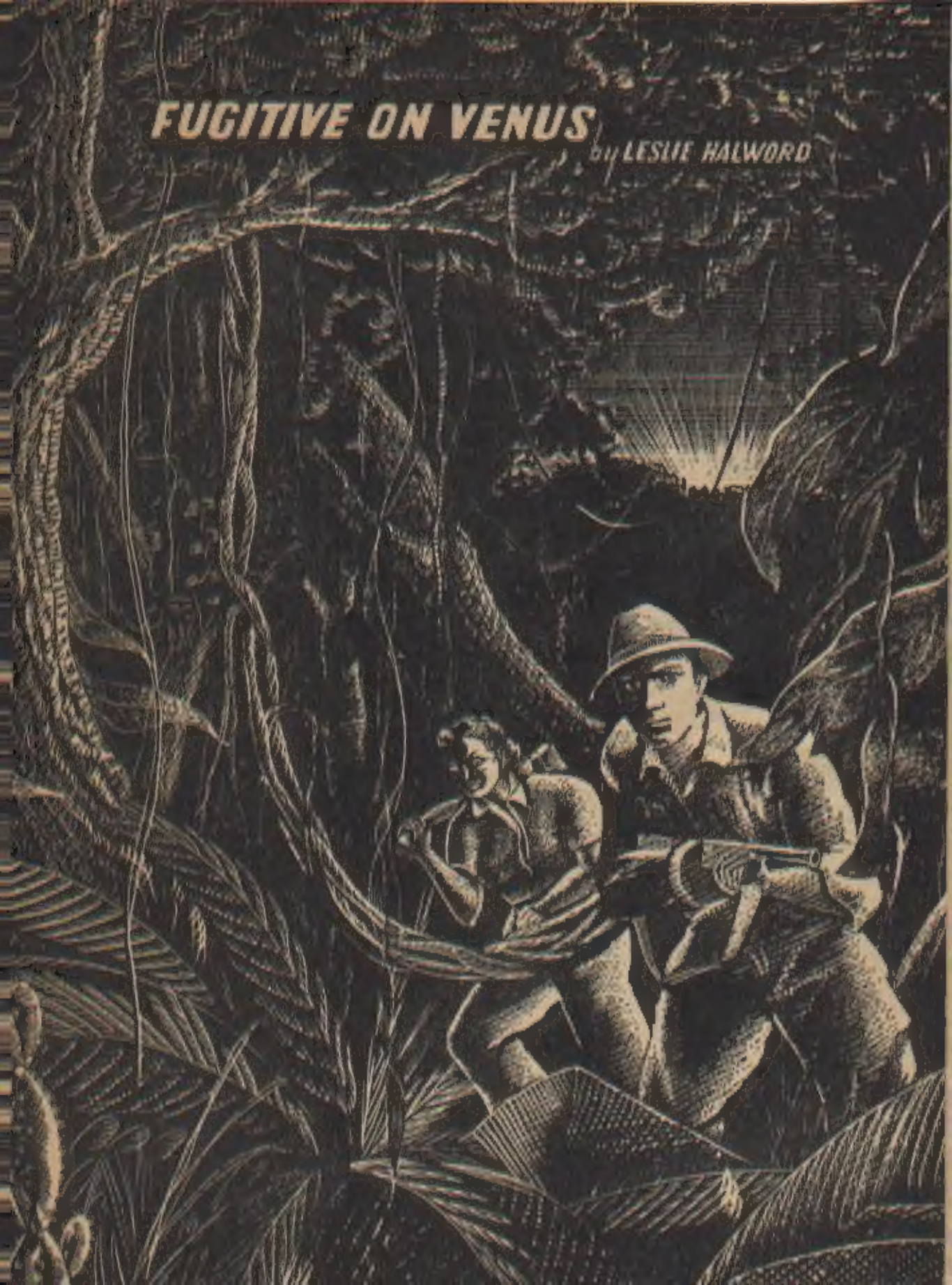
SPACE HOBO'S DIARY.—BY RICH ACKMAN.

(The space hobo had some strange stories to tell. And this is one of his strangest . . .)

If you have enjoyed reading "AMAZING ADVENTURES" you can obtain the companion magazine at most bookstalls. "FUTURISTIC STORIES" contains many gripping yarns from the pens of the above authors.

FUGITIVE ON VENUS

by LESLIE HALWORD



"FUGITIVE ON VENUS"

By Leslie Halward

The strident wailing siren over at Grunton Penitentiary sent a hideous prolonged signal into the foggy night. Armed guards manned the powerful searchlight mounted on the twenty foot wall, swivelled it expertly across the barren stretch of rocky ground leading to the hills. It revealed nothing—its brilliance was dimmed by the thickness of the fog before it.

The heavy iron gates clanged open and three pursuit cars loaded with guards roared out into the night. The siren continued to screech hideously, warning the solitary dwellers thereabouts that a dangerous man had escaped . . .

For Grunton Penitentiary contained only one kind of inmate—the homicidal maniac!

Bourbon's bid for freedom had been made with the reckless desperation and strength of the madman. He had feigned illness in his cell, and collapsed. He had been taken hastily to the room which served as hospital ward, and put to bed. Then, as the doctor had bent over him to administer a sedative, he had reached up and brutally strangled him.

The one guard at the door had been easy—he was dead now. From there it had been a simple matter to don his uniform, climb the steps to the observation tower on the wall, and knock the watcher there senseless. Armed with the man's gun he had risked the twenty foot leap—and had made it without injury.

At the prison they knew he must be still at hand. Hardly fifteen minutes had passed since he had been carried from his cell to the ward. So that his start could only have been a slight one.

Bourbon crouched by the foot of the thickly wooded hills, peering back and listening intently. Faintly muffled by the fog he could hear the whining of the escape siren, the higher tone of the car sirens, and the roar of the motors. A dim luminosity told him the searchlights were out too.

And then a new tone was added—one which sent chilling fingers coursing along his backbone.

The deep throated baying of a bloodhound! And not so far away from his present position!

He rose to his feet and turned, picking his way towards the steep path which led up the side of the hill. He plunged fearfully into the woods, staring before him with maniacal eyes,

shotgun tight in his hands.

The path led steeply upwards; he followed it, tripping now and then across tangled masses of long grass, and small irregular stones and rocks. Behind him the baying became more pronounced, nearer.

The light loomed up in the fog suddenly, startling him. He had not known there was a house high on that hill, but it certainly looked like it. The light came from a square aperture, possibly a window. It glowed against the grey swirling fog tendrils.

Bourbon paused and listened. His fingers twitched as he heard the sound of the hound again, behind. He knew the hound would be accompanied by grim, hard featured men with guns—men who knew the menace he constituted and would shoot him down without mercy rather than let him make good his escape.

Perhaps he could hide—the house . . .

He crept forward through the trees and approached the window.

The house itself was not impressive; it was a wooden building, following the style of a Mexican Hacienda. He fumbled for the steps which led to the verandah and found them. Wary of creaky boards he slunk along in the shadows of the overhanging boards, gained the window itself.

The window was slightly open at the bottom, and a gentle breeze stirred the net curtains so that he could see inside.

The room he saw was plain, without furniture of any kind. The walls were enamelled white, unrelieved by border or panel. The floor was covered with a clean piece of grey rubber.

Standing by the far wall, facing a shining metal contrivance, were two people—an aged, grey-haired man, and a pretty girl. The man was talking in low tones, but his words came quite clearly to Bourbon.

"It's finished, Lana—complete in every detail. It can't fail to work as I have planned."

"But dad," said the girl, "how can you prove it?"

"By trying it, my child. I shall advertise for a suitable man: one who would have the courage to face such an experiment. And there are many."

"But—are you sure it will work in reverse? Suppose it won't bring him back again?"

"It will—it must. Listen, Lana—I have already experimented with inanimate objects. They have returned . . . there is no earthly reason why a living subject should not do so if he follows my instructions carefully. Provided he does not move from the spot at which he reassembles, he will be perfectly safe. I would try it myself but—I am the only one who can operate the beam. You'll see, Lana. I've devoted twenty years of my life, living here away from life itself, constructing this beam. It can be directed to any planet; at the moment it is focussed upon Venus. When the subject steps upon the plate in that cage, and I reverse this lever, his body is split into its tiny elements. These are transmitted along the beam to their preordained destination, no matter how far it may be. When they reach that point, the work of the beam transmitter is done. The object, whatever it may be, forms again. The process is reversed and the atomic structure assembled. This is the final step—once this experiment is completed I am ready to commercialise the invention. It will entirely replace shipping, air-freight and rail-carriage upon Earth. The heaviest goods can be transported clear across the world, clear across the Universe even, in split seconds. You realise the value of it, my child?"

"I think I do, father. But the thought of this experiment unnerves me. Why is it needed? You have already proved that the beam transmitter works efficiently on Earth. Can you not wait . . . ?"

He shook his head: "No, Lana. Like every scientist I have that burning curiosity to know what the other planets hold. What forms of life, what mineral wealth, whether there are any great civilisations there."

Listening outside the window, Bourbon tensed. The idea which had entered his mind almost made him reel. It was fantastic, and yet—he was prepared to clutch at any straw to elude recapture. Yes, even voluntary exile from the world he knew and hated. Even a nightmare experiment with his living body as the guinea pig!

The baying of the hound closer still confirmed his decision. He walked quickly round to the door, hammered upon it.

Waited. The door opened, and he confronted the girl. He said:

"I wish to see your father. At once, please."

The girl tried hard to distinguish him, but the fog made it impossible to see more than a dark outline. She said: "Will you come in, Mister . . . ?"

He stepped inside without giving his name. And as he swung the door shut behind him her eyes fell upon the dreaded uniform of Grunton

Penitentiary for the Homicidally Insane. Her red lips went wide for a scream . . .

"NO!" snarled Bourbon, whipping his shotgun from beneath his grey tunic. "Be quiet!"

She read the threat in his eyes, cut the scream off short. He went on quickly: "I am a desperate man. I will not stop at murder to achieve my ends. Tonight, already, two men have died by my hand, and I would not be averse to adding a woman to the score. Take me to your father—immediately!"

For a second she hesitated. From the laboratory her father called:

"What is it, Lana?"

"A—gentleman to see you, father." She gagged over the word gentleman, and Bourbon noted it and smiled evilly.

"What? Here—at this time, in this fog? Very well, show him in to me."

She walked towards the lab., followed closely by the gun and the madman. She entered, and her father turned round from his machine . . .

Bourbon snarled: "Make no outcry. Should you do so I will not hesitate to kill your daughter. You understand?"

The scientist betrayed no alarm. He nodded and said: "I heard the escape siren going at Grunton. You are that man?"

"I am that man," agreed Bourbon. My name is Bourbon—John Bourbon."

"I remember your case—you roamed Chicago slashing people with knives, did you not?"

"Not people—women," pointed out Bourbon. "I am rather proud of my record. They called me a worse peril than Jack the Ripper. But unfortunately they apprehended me . . ."

"And judged you guilty but insane, and detained you in Grunton."

"I see you read your paper," said Bourbon. "But there is no time for discussion of that topic now. I need your aid . . ."

The old scientist smiled and shook his head: "You may expect no help from me, Bourbon," he said. "I can give you none as it is, and even if I could I would not."

Bourbon said: "Listen . . . do you hear?"

The ghostly baying of the bloodhound crept out of the fog into the room. Bourbon went on: "They are on my trail. Soon they will find me, and take me back. If that happens, I will leave behind me two bodies in this house . . . I need not mention names . . ."

"You dare not!"

"Why not? They cannot harm me other than lock me up. I am insane—so they say. You see? It matters nothing to me how many people I murder now."

"And if I refuse?"

"Then your daughter dies first, and you after her. But you will not refuse; I have a proposition to put to you."

The old man adjusted his spectacles calmly and moved closer.

Bourbon rapped: "Stay where you are for the moment. This is my offer: you will tell the guards, if they come here, that you have not seen me, that you do not know where I am. You will send them away . . ."

"And in return?"

"In return I will be your human guinea pig. I will submit myself to your experiment. You understand?"

The girl said, quickly: "No—no, father."

But the scientist's eyes were gleaming with interest. He said:

"Suppose they insist on searching the house?"

"Permit them. They will find nothing, for I will be gone."

"You mean that you are willing to undergo the experiment now, without further preparation?" he gasped.

Bourbon nodded. Lana said again: "Dad, you can't. You can't turn a maniac loose, not on any world—of course you can't . . . Dad!"

Her father looked at her, smiled. "Don't be alarmed, child. Venus is a young planet—I feel sure there can be no human life on it. If our friend wishes to find out, why not . . .?"

There was a shrewd look in his eyes. Bourbon didn't fail to see it there and wonder . . .

Naturally, he thought to himself, the old fool may know of some way of killing me, once he gets me on that plate! Perhaps that is his plan. Perhaps something will go wrong! Purposely . . .

The scientist said: "I agree, Bourbon."

He said it rather too quickly, in view of his daughter's protests. Bourbon was certain he meant to work some trick with his machine.

But he betrayed no sign of his knowledge. He moved towards the cage of platinum wire, stood upon the plate beneath him. He still held the girl by the shoulder, her back towards him.

There was a thunderous hammering upon the door; Bourbon rapped:

"How do I know you won't reverse this thing immediately the guards are here, and bring me back?"

"I wouldn't have time. The transmission is only the work of a few seconds. You will see me pull the lever, suffer a momentary blackout, and the next second you will find yourself on—Venus!"

Bourbon growled: "They're at the door. I'm ready . . ."

And he suddenly jerked the girl, Lana, roughly into the cage with him. Snapped: "So you won't try any funny tricks the girl goes with me, Professor. By all accounts she will be very useful on a planet which has no other women."

"You swine . . ." cried the scientist.

Bourbon grated: "Pull the lever! Pull it, or by God I'll shoot your daughter here and now . . . do you hear?"

His eyes blazed with savagery; he jammed the shotgun hard into the girl's spine so that she screamed with pain. He shouted: "PULL IT!"

And hopelessly the old man obeyed . . .

.

Bourbon was floating in a vast, inky dark void. He no longer had a body—what body there was of him had resolved itself into a hundred trillion tiny notes . . .

His thoughts were disjointed, unreal . . . like his body.

He did not know how long he had been like this; it might have been a second or all eternity . . .

And then his consciousness was blotted out by a blinding white flash—everything became burning, nerve shattering pain . . .

.

Professor Systrom walked hopelessly along the hall towards the front door. The imperative hammering had risen in volume, until the stout oak shook beneath its weight. The bloodhounds bayed now with a sharper note. A man called: "Professor—open the door."

Systrom opened it and stood back as a bronzed young man of sturdy build pushed in. Behind him were three guards, armed, and pulling back on the leashes of the gaunt, man-hunting dogs.

The young man swung his shotgun under his arm on seeing Systrom alone. He said: "Man called Bourbon's escaped from the Pen. Thought he might have broken in here when you didn't answer at once. You haven't seen or heard anything—unusual?"

Systrom said: "Alec, I'm half mad myself. I don't know how to tell you this . . . but Lana . . . that lunatic . . . he's . . ."

Alec Caxton, the young Governor of Granton, grasped his arm. Lana was his fiancée; the Professor's ominous words had shaken him badly: "Professor—what happened? You don't mean to say something has happened to Lana . . . not . . ."

Systrom said: "Alec, you know the line of my experiments have been taking. Well, tonight Bourbon burst in and forced me to send him out through the beam transmitter. I intended to swing the machine off course and send him out into the void—but at the last second he pulled Lana into the cage with him, and it was either a question of sending her with him or seeing her murdered there and then. I sent her . . ."

"Then she's . . ." Caxton broke off short, afraid to put his thoughts into words. Systrom said: "Yes, Alec. She's alone on Venus, facing Heaven knows what horrible perils."

Alone except for the worst peril of them all—John Bourbon!"

Alec seemed stunned; slowly he turned to the guards, said: "You can go back—I'll take care of Bourbon now."

"But . . ." protested one.

Caxton repeated, dully: "Go back."

He shut the door in the astonished faces of his men. Then he followed Systrom into the lab., stood staring at the shining machine.

At last he muttered: "Isn't there any way of getting them back?"

Systrom shook his head: "Only if they remain in the precise spot at which they alighted," he groaned. "I could keep the beam located on that point and keep the reverse lever down. I have already obtained one or two loose pieces of Venusian mineral that way."

"Then if you reverse the lever now?"

"I reversed it immediately. It was too late. They must have moved from the place almost at once."

Alec reflected a moment. Then said suddenly: "Professor, I'm going *after* them. Not so much because it's my duty to get Bourbon, but—well, Lana . . . can you send me up there?"

Systrom nodded: "I was hoping you would say that, my boy. I can't go myself since only I can operate the beam. But you . . . you *can*. If you find Lana and Bourbon, return to the spot at which you landed on Venus. I, for my part, will stay by the beam night and day until you return or—I fall dead. Take this . . ."

He handed Caxton a queerly shaped rifle. Said: "It may be very useful—it fires explosive bullets, and God knows what forms of life you may encounter there . . ." Caxton nodded and gripped the old man's hand silently. Then took his position upon the plate, in the cage . . .

CHAPTER TWO

Bourbon shook his head dazedly as the white flare about him began to fade.

His eyes functioned again, and memory returned—Granton—the escape—house on the hill—Venus—LANA . . .

At once he realised he was holding her tightly still, the gun jammed hard into her back. And then he felt a great exultation as he knew the Professor's gadget *did* work: that wherever he was he was free, no longer pursued!

With that thought came caution: it crossed his mind what the scientist had said about reversing the lever to bring back anyone in the radius of the beam. And quickly he stepped to one side, dragging the girl with him, until he fancied he had moved far enough away from the original point to be safe.

Lana was still staring blankly at the weird landscape about them, not able to realise they

really were on Venus. Although she had never said so to her father, she was secretly inclined to amusement at his insistence that his machine was capable of sending people and things through space to any given point. Now it seemed he had been right—and that the beam had no limits!

She was glad for him—but the knowledge of her own horrible position weighed down upon her. She stole a glance at Bourbon from wide terrified eyes.

Bourbon smiled: "Ah, my dear. Beginning to take notice again, eh? Your father was not quite as mad as I had thought—I scarcely dared to hope his wild statements were correct—but any chance was worth while to me. A pleasant afterthought, was it not, to bring you along?"

He regarded her, released her, and stroked his heavy jowls with his free hand. He chuckled: "Yes, very attractive. Far more attractive than any of the women I—er—disposed of in Chicago. So very attractive, in fact, that I may be tempted to spare you—who knows? It will depend, of course, upon your behaviour whilst under my—er—protection!"

She covered her face with her hands and said nothing. Her body shook with muffled sobs. He continued pleasantly: "It's wonderful here, is it not? Our little Garden of Eden, eh? Ha, ha! Adam and Eve, all over again, my dear. And if your father is correct no one else on this entire planet who is like we are. Therefore we must get better acquainted as soon as possible—much better acquainted . . ."

She removed her hands from her face, composed again. She said:

"I hate you!"

It was a dangerous remark to make to Bourbon, and men like him. But fortunately for her he was revelling in his freedom, and was not without curiosity concerning this new found world. Therefore, apart from a slight narrowing of the eyes, and a fondling of the gun trigger, he did not display his anger. He said:

"In that case it is even more essential that we should know each other better. In time I have no doubt, you will come to accept me as the inevitable. Unfortunately I am uncertain just how much time I am prepared to allow you . . . we will see . . ."

She made a sudden rush towards the point at which they had landed. She was almost there when Bourbon reached her, caught her arm and twisted it cruelly behind her back.

This time he dragged her across the warm, moist, brilliantly green grass, until a good distance was between them and the means of return to Earth. He warned her: "Make another attempt, my dear, and I will be compelled to kill you here and now."

She made no reply. Bourbon now glanced round to examine his surroundings more fully.

What he saw was impressive, even to his distorted mind.

A hundred yards from where they stood, the greensward ceased abruptly, and gave place to flaring crimson plants with poppy-like heads fully three feet across. These extended in a carpet, unbroken, as far as the eye could see. One flaming crimson mass, like a royal carpet of welcome.

To the right, about a mile distant, a mighty forest reared into the vapour ridden sky. To the left could be seen a gigantic swamp of brown viscous liquid, which boiled and bubbled and cast steam and mist into the burning Venusian air. The sky itself was invisible to his eyes; the steaming atmosphere of the young world hid it effectively from view. But the mist and steam were golden-tinted by the rays of the Sun above, the heat which beat down was clammy and oppressive.

Bourbon said: "A charming place, although rather hot. Still, it will doubtless enable me to practise endurance, for the time when I will undoubtedly be going somewhere much hotter. And now we had best find sanctuary of sorts—are you ready to march, my dear Lana?"

There was no other course open to her: silently she obeyed the menace of the shotgun and climbed wearily to her feet from the grass where she had been sitting. With Bourbon slightly behind her she began to trek in the direction he indicated.

The vast, mysterious forest gradually became plainer.

It was a wonderland. Even from the distance they could see gaudy plumed birds whirring about the trees, flitting from branch to branch, and setting up a shrill piping. The leaves of the giant trees themselves were like aeroplane wings, coloured vividly, in every shade conceivable, and some which weren't.

They entered the forest, Bourbon remarking: "Now at last we really know what an Enchanted Forest looks like."

The greensward continued underfoot here, and there was little tangled vegetation. Majestic flowers clustered round the boles of the trees, of every shape and colour. A faint, sweet odour came from them, more exquisite than any known to Terrestrials.

As yet, other than the birds, they had seen no form of life. But Lana sensed something evil, something alive, in the forest itself. The feeling persisted, even when they had been walking into it for more than an hour. Every now and then a musty, dead odour would intrude upon the delightful fragrance of the blooms . . . and this appeared to emanate from clumps of coarse, sinewy plants, with long, convoluted stalks of a grey hue.

Bourbon, despite his unpleasant personality, was truly entranced by the forest. His gun trailed from his hand, and his eyes darted to

and fro delightedly, taking in the structure of each different variety of growth and tree. Madman though he was there was much of the poet and idealist in him, as there is in so many insane people.

He showed no sign of stopping, and not wishing to draw his attention on to herself any sooner than could be helped, Lana walked on, without speaking.

At last Bourbon began to feel thirst.

They were passing a small, joyously bubbling stream when he spoke for the first time since they had entered the forest. He said:

"Hmm. The pangs of thirst begin to be annoying, my dear. I should hate to lose you, but I must ask you to be the first to partake of that water . . . do you mind?"

Numbly she obeyed. She didn't much care if the water poisoned her, brought her to a writhing agonised heap. Even that would be better than what she might expect from Bourbon!

Bourbon watched her drinking, then waited, waited until he was sure the crystal-like stream was having no ill effect upon her. Then he himself drank, deeply.

The water was no different to that found on Earth. It eased his parched throat and refreshed him for the journey again. He motioned to Lana to get to her feet, and she did so, although she was almost dropping from fatigue. The stress of events had told upon her, and her legs felt as if her weary mind could not propel them another step.

But darkness was creeping on them before Bourbon called a halt.

They were in a small glade, surrounded by trees, and the steamy air above was rapidly dulling as the Sun went down. Bourbon nodded to one of the trees: "We must attempt to find ourselves a cosy little nook aloft for tonight," he said. "Until we know more about the dangers we may expect to encounter on this planet. Later we can build ourselves a little home—won't that be delightful? A little love nest on the planet of love. Captivating isn't it?"

His good humour was so high that he cared little for the fact that she ignored his remarks pointedly. He told himself she would come round, women, any woman, needed the strength and help of a man on a strange world like this. In time she would grow to love him—or so he felt sure.

He would not have been very flattered had he been able to see into the girl's mind. For Lana welcomed his suggestion of taking sanctuary in the trees, mainly because it meant he would be unable to force his loathsome physical contact upon her. Wedged between the boughs they would hardly dare to stir, let alone struggle.

She watched him clamber agilely up the thick trunk of a nearby giant, taking his handholds

from the tiny sprouting branches which were plentiful. He gained the broad limbs on the lower terrace, and lodged himself into position.

For a moment she thought of running whilst he was unable to pursue . . . but the thought of being alone and helpless on Venus deterred her from that course; objectionable and dangerous as he was, Bourbon was at least preferable to the dreaded unknown.

She scrambled up after him, hoping her legs would hold out until she had reached security. Bourbon extended a hand and helped her to the branch beside him.

He talked as the Sun went altogether, and a sombre twilight crept over the forest. The twilight dulled into a purple dusk, and this remained. She could see him balanced in the crook of the tree, gazing vaguely towards her in the dusk. He was a shadow, barely distinguishable against the dark trunk.

If she were to wait until he slept, then pushed him . . .

No, that would be as pointless as running from him. She would still be alone here. And so far he had not touched her, or tried to. Something might turn up . . . perhaps her father would contrive to follow them . . . she could, at least, hang on until the last moment. If the worst did come to the worst, she could always kill herself, or get Bourbon to do so by attacking him.

A sudden eerie noise in the darkness made her start. Then she relaxed, realising Bourbon was asleep and snoring. Her head dropped back along the bough she had wedged herself in and she too slept—her regular breathing denoted her sleep was untroubled by dreams.

And in the higher terraces of the trees above, three pairs of eyes peered down, watching, waiting . . .

Alce Caxton shook himself and stared round. It was difficult to believe that he was on Venus, so soon after leaving Earth. But he did not doubt it, strange as it was.

He was on another planet, armed with a peculiar weapon of the Professor's own invention, facing an exhausting search for a man and a girl.

The task seemed almost hopeless, but he refused to show any despair. At least Bourbon could not have gone far—he had not had the time. The first thing was to study the lie of the land.

He roamed round until he found a portion of high, rising land. He plodded up this, expending more energy than he had thought the climb would take. It sloped off about a hundred feet up, into flat tableland. He moved to each of the three sides in turn and stared.

The crimson plain—the boiling, bubbling swamp—the forest—the greensward—

The forest!

He did a double take and brought his eyes back to focus in that direction. Two mannikin-like figures were just vanishing into the leafy interior, and there could be no doubt that there went the two people he sought!

Even as he opened his mouth to call they had vanished.

He ran down the slope towards the forest, across the plain. He reached the edge of the trees panting with exertion and dripping with sweat. His heart was pumping furiously, his head was heavy. It was far too hot to run any great distance on Venus, he found. If he kept this up he would be in no condition to battle Bourbon when at last they did meet.

He slowed down, and entered the trees at a quick walking pace.

Several times he paused to listen, but there was no sound other than the piping of the gaudy little birds, and the humming of their rapidly moving bodies and wings.

Now he began to see how hopeless it would be to find anyone in that maze. Worse, in fact, than the plain, although he had seen the point at which they had entered, and had noted it. For the greensward was a mess-like substance, which sprang to its original position the second his feet had left it. That meant there were no trails left for him to follow. No clues to indicate the direction in which his fiancée and Bourbon had gone.

He tramped on gamely, however. Now he must trust to luck. Nothing else could serve him. Preoccupied as he was, he failed to detect the evil quality about the grey plants, which Lana had noticed earlier. He had not consciously noticed them at all.

Therefore he had no idea, when he leaned against one of these for rest, that there might be danger . . .

It was brought home to him suddenly; his hand, resting upon a bunch of slender grey stalks of a rubbery quality, was suddenly encircled!

He experienced an unpleasant sensation, a pricking and a drawing about the flesh round which the stems of the plant had coiled. He jerked the arm . . .

The arm came forward—and so did the tentacles!

The mass next to his body began to undulate slowly . . .

With a curse of alarm he started away—and the tentacular stems which had stealthily coiled about his legs, brought him down with a crash.

Genuinely afraid now, he fought desperately to break the grip of the stinging plant. The more he struggled, the more the stems twined over him, and he became aware of a warm tendril winding tightly about his throat . . .

Then his eyes caught the gun, lying at hand where he had dropped it. He reached out with

dragging the coracle with him until it grounded upon the sand. She was pushed into it roughly and then it was pushed some paces. The Venusians started to the birds produced a low, hoarse murmur. The birds with a few wheeled with numerous cries. A few of the Venusians uttered some sounds which were like humming or geons.

The Venusians in the sea swam towards the boat, gathered round it. Propelling

themselves with their arms and legs, they gathered round the boat. Lana guessed that they had been on a hunting expedition.

They were all staring at her, and she was

in the boat and tried to pull her turn place as far as was possible.

As they all gazed back towards the shore, she saw a small figure on the water's edge and very

Lana

and up so that the coracle almost

There was Alec, standing help-

way to heartbroken sobbing. Alec had come

to her awful danger, even death, as far as she

Bourbon crept back behind the trees which

He stood where he was afraid that they

Minutes passed and Bourbon was about

It took Bourbon only a moment to realize

Alec Caxton, tramping toward through the

He quickened his pace. He

The shouting had stopped by the time he

CHAPTER FOUR

Alec struggled every inch against the grip about

But unknown to Bourbon other eyes were

The bronzed Venusian gazed down upon

Caxton regained his faculties slowly. He had

been very close to death, and it was some time

from the sea to the shore, and a great
swell of water was coming in.

He was not at all surprised that
the sea was so high, and that the water
was so dark.

They were both drinking and eating
supper.

He was not at all surprised that
the sea was so high, and that the water
was so dark.

Alec was apt to forget the absence of the
fact that Venus was not to be seen
at all.

They were both drinking and eating
supper. The night was dark and the
water was dark. The light was dark
and the water was dark.

Both slept. Alec, somewhat meanly so far
from land. Alec dog tired by his strenuous
day.

The night wore on, and as the Sun charged
the Heavens with the first fish of dawn, Gage
was awake and drinking his companion.

At that day they moved with a strong
toward to the sea. Gage had now
prospected the sea, and he was not at all
surprised that the sea was so high, and
that the water was so dark.

They were both drinking and eating
supper. The night was dark and the
water was dark.

At that day they moved with a strong
toward to the sea. Gage had now
prospected the sea, and he was not at all
surprised that the sea was so high, and
that the water was so dark.

No, the sea was very large.

Alec seemed that must mean it was a contin-
ent. Gage seemed quite certain of himself
and what said where he had obtained his
knowledge since none of the forest owners
were so sure as to say it had been handed
down from a generation to generation.

One day they left land and headed
toward the sea.

And then far away on the horizon a large
grey mass rising to the air became visible.
Gage frowned and stared hard. Alec queried
it was a sea?

Gage shook his head, and his face was
dark.

No. This is such a storm as I have men-
tioned to you. We can but hope it will pass
us by.

He left a remark as he shed, but Alec could
guess the implication behind his words.

Steadily the grey mass grew nearer, and now
a roaring noise became audible. Alec thought
of typhoons, hurricanes, what with the waves
and other raging earthly storms, but this was
unlike anything known to Earth. It bore down

on them with a force and a power
of which they were not aware.

They were both drinking and eating
supper. The night was dark and the
water was dark.

They were both drinking and eating
supper. The night was dark and the
water was dark.

They were both drinking and eating
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They were both drinking and eating
supper. The night was dark and the
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They were both drinking and eating
supper. The night was dark and the
water was dark.

After her capture, the boat she had been in
went on at a fast pace, propelled by the
fishermen. The boat had increased a
few feet.

The land of the fishermen had been reached
It was a small, narrow strip of land, and
it was surprising to find the ugly degenerates were
there.

She had been carried for a period which she
judged to be two hours, and had at length been
taken into one of the buildings. This was
a small, narrow room, and she was

Here she had been taken, and she was
wondering what was going to happen to her.
The fishermen were all looking at her
with curiosity. The High Priest was the
only one who looked at her with the High

She had been taken up stairs, along a passage,
and she was wondering what was going to
happen to her.

Then, after supplying her with a dish of food
mashed with fruit, her captors left her. The
shotgun had been left with her, the fish-men
being unaware that it was a weapon, and taking

of the cracks she gazed down upon the city of
the fish-men. The city was a small, narrow
strip of land, and it was

gleamed with a hundred different shades.
The city was a small, narrow strip of land,
and it was

It sank into it, which was about two
feet deep.

The girl was brought to her, and she was
served to satisfy thirst, and was obviously
satisfied.

The girl was brought to her, and she was
served to satisfy thirst, and was obviously
satisfied.

The girl was brought to her, and she was
served to satisfy thirst, and was obviously
satisfied.

There was no drapery of any description in
the room, and she was wondering what was
going to happen to her.

There was no drapery of any description in
the room, and she was wondering what was
going to happen to her.

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the room, and she was wondering what was
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There was no drapery of any description in
the room, and she was wondering what was
going to happen to her.

There was no drapery of any description in
the room, and she was wondering what was
going to happen to her.

batter each other down as rapidly as possible or be themselves battered down.

Lana sickened as the blood spurted from gaping wounds, and turned away. But her eyes were dragged back again—there was a horrible fascination about the way they fought silently without cries, even when they were mortally injured.

At last ten of them lay dead and dying in the bloody space, and the victors raised their swords towards the lake and shouted in chorus.

The priest produced a bone horn from a leathery pouch, blew upon it, producing a high pitched summoning note.

The waters of the lake swirled, and a frightful head appeared!

Unable to control herself, Lana screamed shrilly.

CHAPTER SIX

The creature was a terrifying, prehistoric nightmare, from the dawn of life.

Only the neck and head were visible, but those were sufficient. The neck sheered from the water to an appalling height, and along the back ran a row of bony spurs, terminating in a horn on top of the head itself. The head was small in proportion to the neck and was shaped similarly to the head of a snake. The eyes were tiny and sunk in swollen flesh, and the nostrils cavernous and gaping. The skin was wrinkled hideously, hanging in loose grey folds round the gaping, slavering jaws, with the sharp fangs.

A ridiculously high pitched hissing sound came from the blood-red maw of the nightmare, and the head poised for a brief instant whilst the crowd dropped to their knees and sent up a wailing chorus.

Then the head darted forward at a lightning-speed. One of the wounded fish-men was seized in cruel teeth and borne aloft. Head motioned and disappeared beneath the surface and there was a confused flurry of water.

A monstrous red stain spread above the spot, and a torn and mutilated portion of flesh floated to the top.

The crowd wailed again, and Lana tried desperately not to be sick.

Minutes passed, and the sea serpent reappeared. The wounded men who lay at its mercy showed no fear so long as they waited there and were waiting for it to drag them being dragged to death with wide staring eyes.

One of the fishermen reared to his feet, seized his spear and took them beneath the surface to finish his bloody work there. And there he found nothing but the blood-stained bank and a sea where ten men had perished.

The High Priest uttered some words and pointed to Lana. The sea serpent apparently accustomed to the ritual, made no effort to

attack the rest of the throng. It remained with its head above water, gazing evilly at Lana as she backed and swaying from side to side.

Lana struck from the priest as he touched her shoulder.

But her hands were still bound, and there was nothing she could do to avert the fate which she was sure awaited her. She knew now that she was a sacrifice—knew the reason for the JANITY shed necklaces for her living captivity. It had all been leading to this day, to this very moment to this loathsome monster from some Venusian nightmare and its foul, blood-stained jaws.

The priest motioned to the men who had brought her, and she felt rope being thrown about her legs and lightened. A tug and she fell helplessly to the bank.

The serpent sent out a red, questing tongue, like a whip lashing round its empty mouth. Lana shuddered.

The priest began to chant again, standing over her with raised arms as the moment of sacrifice drew near.

The serpent swooped beneath the surface momentarily.

The two guards picked Lana up by her feet and shoulders, hurried her to the edge of the lake, laid her down upon the long, red-hued sacrificial platform.

She lay taut and tense, her mind a numbed mass, her eyes fixed to the spot from which the serpent was due to appear...

The chanting ceased; the priest brought out the horn again, blew a sharp note...

The serpent swayed and disappeared, its head high with the air and swooped towards her.

Alec Caxton stirred himself, licked dry lips with his tongue and pulled himself to the gunwale of the boat.

The storm had passed, but no sign of land had they encountered. For hours they had paddled with the seats, but at last fatigue and hunger had taken their toll. George, having been the first to collapse, now lay on the bottom of the boat, semi-conscious. Alec had not been long after him, and he too lay motionless. For hours while the Sun steamed the water about them and blistered his parched skin, Alec was unused to such heat.

The sea water trapped had given him no underlings, was not a habit. It was as that of terra saty.

The boat had ceased to move, and with it had ceased the rescue mission of his old pants. All was still, and no sound could be heard or seen but the thick vapour rising from the water.

Gradually the Sun went down, bringing relief to the two weary travellers. Alec found the

when their heads fell, they felt the great
swords full of skin and dressed in a strange
fashion.

The men saw her. She is of the same race
as the others. You must go to come here. You
will be killed. I will kill you.

"You may try," said Gaygel calmly.

The Kran replied that they were not in
a hurry. His sword was in his hand. Gaygel
backed a step and parried his reckless blows.
Caxton marvelled at his severity
with the unwieldy weapon and watched as the
Kran's sword whirled and swung, stopping
the wild blows of the Kran.

Gaygel being that he had gone on long
enough, he pulled back three paces. The
Kran rushed forward under the impression his
enemy was retreating and Gaygel stepped
swiftly aside and drove his blade through the
body of the other.

The Kran struck through the heart, dropped
instantly and Gaygel wiped his blade on the
man's thighs and slid his sword back into his
belt.

Now we have lost the party through this
fool," he snapped.

As he said the party was gone from sight.
Alec said, "We can but follow the same direction
and trust to luck. Possibly we will see others."

But they saw no more of the Krans as they
continued and time was passing so quickly that
Alec was beginning to get afraid. Afraid they
would even now be too late!

Gaygel also was looking miserable as he
noted his friend's dejectedness. And
finally he said: "It is of no use walking on
blindly. We must find a village, enter it, and
question one of those too old to attend the
games, at the sword point. Do you agree?"

Alec agreed readily and they pushed on until
they beheld the shimmering multi-coloured
pattern of a village in the distance. They exer-
cised care in approaching, but it was silent and
deserted. Presumably the Krans were convinced
they had nothing to fear in their own stronghold,
as the old woman had gone to the games
to see the strange white girl sacrificed, and to
worship at the altar of their God.

Gaygel and Alec trod down the street silently,
prepared to face any who might remain. The
place was still and quiet, so that when they
heard breathing in one of the buildings it was
loudly and being a wheezy, choky breath.

They laid open the door and rushed into
the room. An old woman was seated upon a
worn chair, wide-eyed and dazed. Her eyes
were so far sunken into her head as to be invis-
ible at a casual glance, and her withered breasts
sagged against her wrinkled flesh.

Gaygel had no respect for the aged and infirm.
Death on Venus lurked at every corner, and the
average life span was incredibly short. From
what Gaygel had told him, Alec had computed

it to be at most forty-five years. Anyone
passing the old woman's house would find
her sitting there, waiting for the M.

Gaygel pressed the old woman's hand. She
looked at him with a strange expression. We were
you to reply to our question. Do you know

Her old, wrinkled face was
too old to be surprised or afraid.

Gaygel asked her. How and where the
place at which the games take place.

She considered deeply. She said, "The altar
of the Sea is at the end of the road."

"Is there any other?"

"No."

"Then how may we reach the altar?"

She shook with cackling and laughter.

"Answer, old woman, or I kill!" snapped
Gaygel.

Why should I answer?" she whined. "I
am not afraid to die. Why do you want to
know where the games take place?"

"That is none of your business. Answer or
I will kill..."

Kim then. I have not much longer now to
live."

Gaygel raised his sword savagely, drew it
back. But Caxton laid a detaining hand upon
his arm.

"Do not kill her, Gaygel."

"But why not?" She refuses to answer."

"That may be—but upon Earth we do not
kill old women."

Gaygel looked nonplussed and said, "She is my
enemy. They are all our enemies. I shall
kill this very crone has begun some of those dogs
who now prey upon our people and over Venus."

The old woman had been inspecting Caxton
closely during this dialogue and now she said,

You are not of his kind. What do you want?

"I come to the altar," stated Caxton, "seeing
one who was taken from me. A girl, who is
my mate."

The old crone nodded. "You are kind, and
although I do not understand you, I will tell
you that which you wish to know if you think
you can prevail against my countrymen."

Caxton bent eagerly towards her.

"Help me to the door," she whispered.

Gaygel on one side. Caxton on the other, they
got her as far as the door. Here she pushed
along the road with a bony finger.

"It is straight on—you must not turn or
Caxton from here in a straight line, and you
will find the lake and the altar."

Then she took a fit of coughing, and they
took her back and sat her down. As they
moved hurriedly away up the street they could
hear her still at it.

"How do we know she was not lying?"
questioned Gaygel.

"I don't think she was. Apparently she
thinks that we are going to certain death any

...the birds were not so much as they
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But the specks of... grew... at
last... as
a party... of... to overtake the fugitives.

Gaygel panted: "We have not the mastery of
... to overtake the fugitives.
... to overtake the fugitives.
... to overtake the fugitives.
... to overtake the fugitives.
... to overtake the fugitives.
... to overtake the fugitives.
... to overtake the fugitives.
... to overtake the fugitives.

They ranged across and struck off in the
new course. The... we
had... to their rear...
... to their rear...
... to their rear...
... to their rear...
... to their rear...
... to their rear...
... to their rear...
... to their rear...

They had... were
... a vast steaming marshland, dotted
with...
... dotted with...
... dotted with...
... dotted with...
... dotted with...
... dotted with...
... dotted with...
... dotted with...

They had approached a path of reeds which
obscured them from their enemies behind and
looked out now.

The birds... as if they would
crash into the swamp but at the last moment
their pace slackened, and they touched the
ground gently. The three slid from their
backs and Gaygel said:

"Send the birds up again, they will go home
and the Krans will see them and think we have
turned round in desperation."

The fluttering... of the birds...
th... Krans...
... Krans...
... Krans...
... Krans...
... Krans...
... Krans...
... Krans...
... Krans...

The other two obeyed, jabbing their mounts
in the neck and watching them soar into the
misty sky. The fluttering of their great wings
died away, and all was silent but for the
blowing and hissing of the sprays and geyser
about them.

"I am sorry we had to land here," murmured
Gaygel regretfully. "It is possibly the worst
portion of Venus that I know. Here there are
many wild, carnivorous animals of massive
proportions. Yet it is better that we should
take our chances than be captured by the Krans.
There would be no mercy from them."

Running together they moved off out of the
mist. Gaygel shaded his eyes and peered up-
wards, then pointed with a stick to a bunch of
the flying birds in the distance.

somewhere reasonably safe to rest until the sun
light returns. In the darkness I would lose
my way and would wander into the quicksands
which abound."

Alec said: "We're in your hands, Gaygel.
You know best."

Gaygel nodded and cast about him. At
length he decided on a raised lump of rock
which stood some fifteen feet above the marsh
land itself. He indicated this and the three
tired adventurers walked over, squelching
through mud and water, and made themselves
as comfortable on it as conditions would permit.

The purple dusk stole across the land and
gradually they fell into a sleep, only Gaygel
remaining awake and watchful. He smiled,
a kindly smile, as he noticed Lana huddled in
Alec's arms and wondered if his friend would
ever get back to Earth. If not, thought Gaygel,
they could live with him in the forest.

Hours had passed and his nostrils wrinkled
suddenly as a queer odour assailed them. Then
he jumped excitedly to his feet...

CHAPTER EIGHT

It was a ghastly, sickly, sweet smell that
Gaygel became conscious of, and he at once
shook his two companions by the shoulders.

Alec rubbed sleepy eyes and yawned. Lana,
a lighter sleeper, was awake almost at the first
touch.

"Quickly," breathed Gaygel. "We must
move on—at once."

Alec grunted and stirred himself, then peered
at the purple darkness.

"What the heck, it ain't dawn yet!"

"We cannot wait for dawn. We must take
our chance in the swamp, at least until we get
clear of this."

"This? What?"

"Can you not smell it?" questioned Gaygel.

Alec smiled. "Why, yes, now you mention
it I can. A sickly kind of smell... what is it?"

"The red Mengas," explained Gaygel, and
Alec shook his head and asked: "What's that?
Something to eat?"

"No. Something which means death for all
of us if we do not escape from its radius of
influence at once."

"What is it, Alec?" asked Lana as they
climbed to their feet.

"Just another little Venusian pleasantry,
darling," granted Alec. "Don't worry about
a thing. Gaygel has everything under control.
I hope!"

Gaygel looked at him enquiringly. Alec
said: "Lana wants to know what we're up
against exactly, Gaygel."

Gaygel nodded. "It is perhaps the worst peril
of all. On one side of this marsh there is a

vast forest of red Mengas. They are a very
large, and very beautiful flower.

Alec said: "I think I saw them when I
arrived. Stretch fancies, don't they?"

Gaygel nodded. "They do not bloom properly
until it is night," he explained. "But later,
when they open fully, they release a fatal gas—
many of my tribesmen have perished under it.
No man can survive it for more than fifteen
minutes, and even ten minutes of exposure
seriously affects him, making him quite useless.
We punish our thieves and murderers by driv-
ing them into it at night. If they can cross
safely they are pardoned. But as yet no one
has ever been pardoned. No one has crossed."

"But there isn't any forest of Mengas here,"
expostulated Alec. "Not in the marsh."

"No. But somewhere about there must be
an odd plant growing, and this is it, with bloom
and giving off poisonous vapours. Ever one
plant is sufficient to do a great deal of damage
if inhaled long enough. Fortunately I detected
the odour the moment it arose. That is why
we must make haste."

Alec helped Lana slide off the rock, said:
"Heck, Gaygel, what other botanical monstrosi-
ties have you got on Venus?"

"There are many," replied the Venusian.
In the heart of this swamp, there are
plants which, were I to describe their qualities
to you, would make you shudder.

"I'm shuddering already," Alec retorted.

They started walking again. Drawing on gel.
By the time they got out of range of the sickly
plant their heads were swimming a little and
they halted to rest. Gaygel said: "It is well
that I remained awake. Another fifteen
minutes of exposure and none of us would have
been capable of moving."

They found a fresh anchorage shortly, but
Alec and Lana also remained awake this time.
Their appetite for sleep had been entirely taken
away. The three sat round in a group talk-
ing, with Alec acting as interpreter. For Gaygel
could not understand the English words he had
been taught when they were spoken by the
high voice of a woman. Indeed it appeared
to grate on his nerves when Lana spoke at all,
and Alec said: "Can't you stand the sound of
a female voice, Gaygel?"

Gaygel shook his head: "I can stand it,
Allekk, but it jars upon my nerves. It is the
clear, high tone I think. Here we all speak in
exactly the same tone."

"You're lucky you aren't on Earth," Alec
grinned. "There the women do all the talking.
Never give it a rest from morning to night."

Gaygel looked surprised. "And do the men
allow it?"

"They can't help it. Can't get a word in
edgewise."

"Then," pointed out Gaygel, reasonably,

"MARY HAD A LITTLE.....?"

By N. Wesley Firth

(And even when I at Mary went the ³ was sure to go. It was exactly like
t ¹ ² ³ ⁴ ⁵ ⁶ ⁷ ⁸ ⁹ ¹⁰ ¹¹ ¹² ¹³ ¹⁴ ¹⁵ ¹⁶ ¹⁷ ¹⁸ ¹⁹ ²⁰ ²¹ ²² ²³ ²⁴ ²⁵ ²⁶ ²⁷ ²⁸ ²⁹ ³⁰ ³¹ ³² ³³ ³⁴ ³⁵ ³⁶ ³⁷ ³⁸ ³⁹ ⁴⁰ ⁴¹ ⁴² ⁴³ ⁴⁴ ⁴⁵ ⁴⁶ ⁴⁷ ⁴⁸ ⁴⁹ ⁵⁰ ⁵¹ ⁵² ⁵³ ⁵⁴ ⁵⁵ ⁵⁶ ⁵⁷ ⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ ⁶⁰ ⁶¹ ⁶² ⁶³ ⁶⁴ ⁶⁵ ⁶⁶ ⁶⁷ ⁶⁸ ⁶⁹ ⁷⁰ ⁷¹ ⁷² ⁷³ ⁷⁴ ⁷⁵ ⁷⁶ ⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ ⁷⁹ ⁸⁰ ⁸¹ ⁸² ⁸³ ⁸⁴ ⁸⁵ ⁸⁶ ⁸⁷ ⁸⁸ ⁸⁹ ⁹⁰ ⁹¹ ⁹² ⁹³ ⁹⁴ ⁹⁵ ⁹⁶ ⁹⁷ ⁹⁸ ⁹⁹ ¹⁰⁰ ¹⁰¹ ¹⁰² ¹⁰³ ¹⁰⁴ ¹⁰⁵ ¹⁰⁶ ¹⁰⁷ ¹⁰⁸ ¹⁰⁹ ¹¹⁰ ¹¹¹ ¹¹² ¹¹³ ¹¹⁴ ¹¹⁵ ¹¹⁶ ¹¹⁷ ¹¹⁸ ¹¹⁹ ¹²⁰ ¹²¹ ¹²² ¹²³ ¹²⁴ ¹²⁵ ¹²⁶ ¹²⁷ ¹²⁸ ¹²⁹ ¹³⁰ ¹³¹ ¹³² ¹³³ ¹³⁴ ¹³⁵ ¹³⁶ ¹³⁷ ¹³⁸ ¹³⁹ ¹⁴⁰ ¹⁴¹ ¹⁴² ¹⁴³ ¹⁴⁴ ¹⁴⁵ ¹⁴⁶ ¹⁴⁷ ¹⁴⁸ ¹⁴⁹ ¹⁵⁰ ¹⁵¹ ¹⁵² ¹⁵³ ¹⁵⁴ ¹⁵⁵ ¹⁵⁶ ¹⁵⁷ ¹⁵⁸ ¹⁵⁹ ¹⁶⁰ ¹⁶¹ ¹⁶² ¹⁶³ ¹⁶⁴ ¹⁶⁵ ¹⁶⁶ ¹⁶⁷ ¹⁶⁸ ¹⁶⁹ ¹⁷⁰ ¹⁷¹ ¹⁷² ¹⁷³ ¹⁷⁴ ¹⁷⁵ ¹⁷⁶ ¹⁷⁷ ¹⁷⁸ ¹⁷⁹ ¹⁸⁰ ¹⁸¹ ¹⁸² ¹⁸³ ¹⁸⁴ ¹⁸⁵ ¹⁸⁶ ¹⁸⁷ ¹⁸⁸ ¹⁸⁹ ¹⁹⁰ ¹⁹¹ ¹⁹² ¹⁹³ ¹⁹⁴ ¹⁹⁵ ¹⁹⁶ ¹⁹⁷ ¹⁹⁸ ¹⁹⁹ ²⁰⁰ ²⁰¹ ²⁰² ²⁰³ ²⁰⁴ ²⁰⁵ ²⁰⁶ ²⁰⁷ ²⁰⁸ ²⁰⁹ ²¹⁰ ²¹¹ ²¹² ²¹³ ²¹⁴ ²¹⁵ ²¹⁶ ²¹⁷ ²¹⁸ ²¹⁹ ²²⁰ ²²¹ ²²² ²²³ ²²⁴ ²²⁵ ²²⁶ ²²⁷ ²²⁸ ²²⁹ ²³⁰ ²³¹ ²³² ²³³ ²³⁴ ²³⁵ ²³⁶ ²³⁷ ²³⁸ ²³⁹ ²⁴⁰ ²⁴¹ ²⁴² ²⁴³ ²⁴⁴ ²⁴⁵ ²⁴⁶ ²⁴⁷ ²⁴⁸ ²⁴⁹ ²⁵⁰ ²⁵¹ ²⁵² ²⁵³ ²⁵⁴ ²⁵⁵ ²⁵⁶ ²⁵⁷ ²⁵⁸ ²⁵⁹ ²⁶⁰ ²⁶¹ ²⁶² ²⁶³ ²⁶⁴ ²⁶⁵ ²⁶⁶ ²⁶⁷ ²⁶⁸ ²⁶⁹ ²⁷⁰ ²⁷¹ ²⁷² ²⁷³ ²⁷⁴ ²⁷⁵ ²⁷⁶ ²⁷⁷ ²⁷⁸ ²⁷⁹ ²⁸⁰ ²⁸¹ ²⁸² ²⁸³ ²⁸⁴ ²⁸⁵ ²⁸⁶ ²⁸⁷ ²⁸⁸ ²⁸⁹ ²⁹⁰ ²⁹¹ ²⁹² ²⁹³ ²⁹⁴ ²⁹⁵ ²⁹⁶ ²⁹⁷ ²⁹⁸ ²⁹⁹ ³⁰⁰ ³⁰¹ ³⁰² ³⁰³ ³⁰⁴ ³⁰⁵ ³⁰⁶ ³⁰⁷ ³⁰⁸ ³⁰⁹ ³¹⁰ ³¹¹ ³¹² ³¹³ ³¹⁴ ³¹⁵ ³¹⁶ ³¹⁷ ³¹⁸ ³¹⁹ ³²⁰ ³²¹ ³²² ³²³ ³²⁴ ³²⁵ ³²⁶ ³²⁷ ³²⁸ ³²⁹ ³³⁰ ³³¹ ³³² ³³³ ³³⁴ ³³⁵ ³³⁶ ³³⁷ ³³⁸ ³³⁹ ³⁴⁰ ³⁴¹ ³⁴² ³⁴³ ³⁴⁴ ³⁴⁵ ³⁴⁶ ³⁴⁷ ³⁴⁸ ³⁴⁹ ³⁵⁰ ³⁵¹ ³⁵² ³⁵³ ³⁵⁴ ³⁵⁵ ³⁵⁶ ³⁵⁷ ³⁵⁸ ³⁵⁹ ³⁶⁰ ³⁶¹ ³⁶² ³⁶³ ³⁶⁴ ³⁶⁵ ³⁶⁶ ³⁶⁷ ³⁶⁸ ³⁶⁹ ³⁷⁰ ³⁷¹ ³⁷² ³⁷³ ³⁷⁴ ³⁷⁵ ³⁷⁶ ³⁷⁷ ³⁷⁸ ³⁷⁹ ³⁸⁰ ³⁸¹ ³⁸² ³⁸³ ³⁸⁴ ³⁸⁵ ³⁸⁶ ³⁸⁷ ³⁸⁸ ³⁸⁹ ³⁹⁰ ³⁹¹ ³⁹² ³⁹³ ³⁹⁴ ³⁹⁵ ³⁹⁶ ³⁹⁷ ³⁹⁸ ³⁹⁹ ⁴⁰⁰ ⁴⁰¹ ⁴⁰² ⁴⁰³ ⁴⁰⁴ ⁴⁰⁵ ⁴⁰⁶ ⁴⁰⁷ ⁴⁰⁸ ⁴⁰⁹ ⁴¹⁰ ⁴¹¹ ⁴¹² ⁴¹³ ⁴¹⁴ ⁴¹⁵ ⁴¹⁶ ⁴¹⁷ ⁴¹⁸ ⁴¹⁹ ⁴²⁰ ⁴²¹ ⁴²² ⁴²³ ⁴²⁴ ⁴²⁵ ⁴²⁶ ⁴²⁷ ⁴²⁸ ⁴²⁹ ⁴³⁰ ⁴³¹ ⁴³² ⁴³³ ⁴³⁴ ⁴³⁵ ⁴³⁶ ⁴³⁷ ⁴³⁸ ⁴³⁹ ⁴⁴⁰ ⁴⁴¹ ⁴⁴² ⁴⁴³ ⁴⁴⁴ ⁴⁴⁵ ⁴⁴⁶ ⁴⁴⁷ ⁴⁴⁸ ⁴⁴⁹ ⁴⁵⁰ ⁴⁵¹ ⁴⁵² ⁴⁵³ ⁴⁵⁴ ⁴⁵⁵ ⁴⁵⁶ ⁴⁵⁷ ⁴⁵⁸ ⁴⁵⁹ ⁴⁶⁰ ⁴⁶¹ ⁴⁶² ⁴⁶³ ⁴⁶⁴

CHAPTER ONE

NOW I'VE SEEN EVERYTHING!

I was prepared to see something screwy up at Doc's place. There was nothing but a set way there even if it was only the Doc way. I dealt with Doc Cheever was looking for inventing things any kind of things like patent mouse traps which cost a lot of money for each mouse they caught to give the mouse for all a bread which took the mouse to operate as if you did eat the loaf with a large saw.

I said I can run the Mad Magician of Moscow and though he might not have been friendly to us, he certainly was a little screwy.

[illegible]

Yes, that was her only friend for as this, and I'm being so lonely, I'd better tell you it was her name of Mary.

I have seen boys who have stood for plenty of time in a public place. Many say that you can see a lot of things in the world if you are the only boy in spite of his screw. It is not for me, or maybe perhaps because of the

Y Mary was worth a peach as peaches go,
 & I bet I'd go any better than Mary.

1. I agree that when the Doc asked me
to do experiments, he told me that
he was not sure if I was sure about which
to do, but I told him I would say

For I was a WAND to stop the progress of my fate, and when I looked at me in that way, and started opening her pretty mouth to say I didn't bother to call again, for I was sunk.

When I was sitting this time I'd just got over that teard and was going along to see Mary the first time in two weeks. I was pretty sure some how or other we'd be waiting for me to step

In as a guinea pig, but this time I was set on having the doctor releasing me and ask to have anything to go with it.

I turned out at the gates of the isolated joint the Dixie Club. It was a big, fancy place with marble and fashioned in the latest taste of the old South. It was planted round with magnolias and the perfume on a summer night was very exquisite. It was a great thing for me. I don't think it always gives me a pain in the nose.

I'd got half way up the path when a voice

Well, well Joseph my dear boy! How nice to see you back. Are you quite well again?

I knew the voice but I'm darned if I could see the owner about. I had a look in the main bar on either side and noted a hairy tree. He was ~~in~~ there. I looked towards the house saw the front door was shut. No one was at the front door.

Hey Doc I told 'Come out wherever
you are where are you

"Here my boy. Have you come along to see Mary."

I thought I was going nuts myself. The voice was close at hand, but the face wasn't. Not a sign of him. I got a crazy notion that maybe he'd discovered the secret of immortality.

'Use your eyes Joseph he told me I
used them The voice wasn't far away,
couldn't be It sounded like it was almost on
top of me ON TOP OF ME IT WAS'

I looked up and there about twenty feet in the air, sitting in a cross-legged position on NOTHING, was Doc Chester.

I had to have time to take this in. I stood and gazed at him as if I was seeing things and he sat there calmly smoking a cigarette and flicked ash down at me with a very fiery. At last I said, I stop and you're going to drive me crazy. What is this party? Come down offa that whatever it is you're on and stop playing tricks on a guy who's a friend of the family. I know you're supposed on wires so don't say you aren't.

He checked and passed his hand over his head and turned and swept his hand round him. He said, 'It's no pick there aren't any wires here, Joseph. I'm just sitting and I shall get down unless I go back through the door.'

So I said, "Don't get into any trouble. Dad, will you?"

Mary said, "I don't know. I don't want to. He's a good boy. I don't want to do was to add something to his dimensional runway which should make vision possible as well."

So then we got going, and it was a pleasant walk into town, with a soft breeze playing between the trees and the sun just sinking behind the mountains and the smell of new mown hay about. It would have been perfect but for one thing.

I could hear, over Mary talking of this and that, a tiny patter of feet at paws on the side of us and after a while it began to rile me.

"Hey, there's a dog about," I said, staring all round. "I can hear."

"Silly boy," Mary smiled. "There isn't a dog and there isn't a sound."

"You wouldn't have heard it anyway above the sound of your own voice," I told her, "but if you stay silent for about ten seconds and keep a look out for it."

She shut me out with that and I have surprised me up and would have done if I hadn't been so tickled. We walked on in dead silence and I put a pat a pat a pat.

"See," I said. "There it is again. There's a dog around."

Mary was looking peculiar and I gave her an alarmed stare.

"What's the matter?" I asked her. "You look as if you'd seen something."

"The trouble is that I haven't seen anything," she said. "But I can feel something! Rubbing against my legs and we've stopped."

I listened. There was a purring sound. I said, "Heck. It sounds like a cat."

I knew what it was. Mary said, "It's that—that thing—you know, from Dad's dimension. IT'S COME BACK THROUGH THE FRAME WITH US."

"Not with us it hasn't," I said hurriedly. "I don't want any part of it. I'm young and I'm new."

"But Joe, what can I do? It seems to be following me."

"Just like the nursery rhyme," I grunted. "Mary had a little . . . ? What?"

"Cheer up, I'll see if it's a cat," I said, turned round and started at the empty runway and said, "Go on, I can do—I mean . . . well . . . oh, I'd better give it a name. I'll call it Chester after father."

He will be pleased," I grunted. She snapped: "Go home Chester, There's a good do—there's a good Chester."

There was a whiffling squeak from beside us. I said, "Here, let me try . . ." I bent down and picked up a stick. I heard an ominous

AT A DISTANCE OF TEN FEET, THERE WAS A

I gave the stick to Mary, said, "You'd better throw it. The runt must think I'm going to beat it off. Go ahead, throw it."

"Go get it, Chester—go get it! Good dog," she said, "go on."

We waited. I said, "Has it gone?" She shrugged: "How should I know?"

The stick was . . . I saw it . . . fifty feet away . . . I saw it . . . up and . . . back towards us . . . dropped at Mary's feet and there was a panting sound. She picked it up again and I said, "Run like hell!"

We ran like hell. We ran right down the road and raced up the . . . We slowed to a walk and I grinned. "See? Just leave it to your . . . I don't know . . . way. I'm going to go back to the road looking for it as now."

I saw it . . . that piece of stick . . . that piece of stick . . . the back of your . . .

We stopped again and I said: "I'll take a firm stand with it. Show the damned thing who's boss round here. Watch this . . . Go home, Chester . . . at once. Do you hear me? Home, boy!" and I flung an imperative arm in the direction of the . . . Mary . . . at my sleeve and said, "Spot . . . are . . ."

They were looking at that. There were a lot of rubbernecks gaping at me and grinning all over their silly faces. I snorted and walked on with a red face. Chester still pattered behind us.

We got to the centre of the . . . There was a jam in the foyer, and a sudden squeal of agony. A fat guy in front turned round and said: "Did I tread on somebody's toe?"

Then he let out one yell of pain and jumped high in the air. Without stopping to tell him it was just Chester, we hurried in.

The show had started and we . . . enjoy themselves. I was saying prayers under my breath that Chester had beat it. If it took it to the . . . here there'd be a riot.

Nothing happened until well towards the . . . I saw Mary . . .

"What's wrong now?" I whispered. "It's rubbing itself against my leg again . . ."

"Cheer up. If it doesn't . . . Chester . . ."

For a moment there was silence. Then Chester . . . Chester PLEASE!"

A thick set guy behind suddenly leaned over

...bing your leg, din'

...I Mary ...
...I know ...
...the his ears ...
...okay, Samson," I mumbled

...I pointed out the ...
...I got ...
...I getting ...

For Heaven's sake
don't yawp any more, Mary, or I'll be a hos-

"But I can't help it, Joe, honestly. It's
me silly tickling ... I, oh ... OH! ...
Chester ...

...I was a ... from the tough baby
Inland. I grabbed Mary's hand and said:
...This is where we head out before
...now set I uppers knocked in the
...quick

"You'll just have to get rid of it some way."
I told her. "Why, if it sticks to you all the
...Fancy having
that on our honeymoon ...

...That's the
...red ...

...I told her. "I got
a raise at the office, and ... well, how about
two weeks next Sunday?"

"Oh, Joe, darling ..."
She moved in closer and I made to put my
...there was a low growl and
a snapping of jaws from just below. I hastily
jumped away. I said: "See? See what I
...possibly have it ...
...could war"

...I guess not. I was getting kind
of fond of it though. But I know what you
mean—it wouldn't do at all on a honeymoon.

...and we didn't see
the ... put out in front
of us from a roadside bush. He had a nasty
...and ...
...from the ...
...as a ... and a ...
...as ...
...as I ... ever
...said

...I ...
...I ...

...so would be enough to keep me while I got
my last sonnet accepted. It's by way of being
a masterpiece—you'll be patrons of the arts."

...I began, and then broke off and
...the ... who ...
...H said ...
...I ...

H made a tentative swish with the ...
in the direction of my nose. I said hastily:
"S ... be enough from!"

You ... make ... pass ...
instat," he said with gratification. "And maybe
the ...

Mary said indignantly: "I will not. I don't
believe for ... you're a poet. Ha
hm Joe!"

"I would as soon hit Joe Louis," I muttered.
She glared at me. "You aren't afraid of ...
...are you?" she yapped. Joe
hm hm

I ... egg made ...
towards ... and ... out ...
...then of course ...
...down ...
crack on the ... I gave me ...
jack ... and behind them I could
see the ... egg ...
then

He gave a sudden shuck of ...
let go of ... and ...
...he ...
reached for Mary ... and gave a further
yell ...
A large patch of nothingness was sud-
denly ...
...up I saw
him making good time down the road, yelling
loudly.

I ... myself up, and Mary said: "Good-
Chester. Leave ...
...the way he ...
down there too frightened to do anything?"

I said: "Why in heck did he wait until I'd
been knocked down?"

"Every girl ... have one," said Mary
admiringly ...
what wonderful house ...

"No thanks," I grunted. "One Chester's
enough in this world. And if you value me and
my ... you I get you ...
...rough the ...
get ...

"Oh, but Joe ..."
"Either you do ... or I'm saying good-bye
right now."

I was not a back of speech.

I eyed him closely. He was about it. I sighed.

I had a great idea for... after it had...

I added hurriedly...

I had a great idea for... after it had...

...of your own?" I suggested.

...enthusiasm he said...

...a line, ten of them. She called "Here..."

Then she stood back and watched, saying to me "I've brought him a good section so he..."

I said, hopefully "Maybe he'll burst!"

Mary said goodnight, kissed me, and went off.

...a wall case took out a small revolver fitted with...

you do it, and then we'll Mary has just vanished."

...

Isn't there a...

and I realised how stiff and...

...

I nod...

...I looked down.

I hoped he wasn't able to fly, or else...

...

...three dimensional bullet just passes him by...

The Doc nodded. "I suspect it has something...

"Maybe poison will?" I said hopefully.

Doc said "Well, it has a different composition to anything on this world."

He took a phial from a shelf and poured some...

There was a snuffling round...

...

...

that night. There was then a sound of snatching ups, and a wuffle of pleasure. Doc said...

...

...him to the eyebrows with strychnine, prussic...

...

isn't doing any good is it?"

... what I said today. Should
him say it to me and when we
can see him. I was not.

I told him that I was a woman and
that he had been with me. He
said that he was not a woman and
that he was a man. He said that he
was a man and that he was a woman.
He said that he was a man and that
he was a woman. He said that he was
a man and that he was a woman.

I said that I was a woman and
that he was a man. He said that he
was a man and that he was a woman.
He said that he was a man and that
he was a woman. He said that he was
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that he was a woman. He said that he
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he was a woman. He said that he was
a man and that he was a woman.

I met Mary at lunch the following day. We
talked for a while in the kitchen, and I
saw that away there was something on her
face. I saw that Mary was hearing
something by my feet, added, "Hiya,
let's go."

Mary walked and walked over to a table
with her tray. I sat down and looked at
her. She was looking at me and I was
looking at her. She was looking at me
and I was looking at her.

I saw Mary. I saw Mary. I saw
Mary. I saw Mary. I saw Mary.

I saw Mary. I saw Mary. I saw
Mary. I saw Mary. I saw Mary.

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I saw Mary. I saw Mary. I saw
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I saw Mary. I saw Mary. I saw
Mary. I saw Mary. I saw Mary.

Oh, Joe, she's not at all. A
thing. I saw her. I saw her. I saw
her. I saw her. I saw her.

I saw her. I saw her. I saw her.
I saw her. I saw her. I saw her.

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I saw her. I saw her. I saw her.
I saw her. I saw her. I saw her.

I whipped off Doc was pointing to
for a half hour, Joseph."

I groaned, and at last I said:
length I looked up and said:
It's all right, let me know

"No, Joe I couldn't"
You'll have to thrash the thing. Break his
belt and just give him a blow or two."

I could see Mary didn't like the idea--hated
I was just a poor devil

I whipped off my shin guards and fastened
them on to her shin legs. Then I said: "Go

Sat there for three hours and
was all right. I was all right

passed. Then Mary cried: "Oh Joe, it DID
work! Joe darling..."

And right at that moment while I gawked at
And making a contented, purring noise!

Doc grinned suddenly. I could have
I said: "Gimme that beat... I'll

that again. Though I hunted high and low I
I couldn't find him. Every time I swished

I tried to swipe him!

run up to Mary's and told her, and we fell into
H... ha ha

With Chester gone, there was nothing to hold
back the happy day. And a week and three
We were all happy

We didn't go away for a holiday
moon. I already had a cosy apartment in town,
and it was roomy enough for the both of us.

After a week or so
Mary said: "I'm going to be a nurse"

I like with a nurse's heart
I could have been a nurse

The minutes later I staggered into the bed-
room like a man who is
a fetching negligé, but it didn't fetch me. I
I know what he went for... only Chester
isn't a HE! Chester is a SHE!"

Mary stared at me in perplexity. I said:
She started to go to the door. I said:
and there's no more to be said here
my finest Persian carpet... they aren't house
Mary, I'm going quietly nuts...

How

She started shoving stuff into her case. She

She started shoving stuff into her case. She

She started shoving stuff into her case. She

She started shoving stuff into her case. She

She started shoving stuff into her case. She

She started shoving stuff into her case. She

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She started shoving stuff into her case. She

She started shoving stuff into her case. She

She started shoving stuff into her case. She

She started shoving stuff into her case. She

THE END

"SPACE HOBO'S DIARY"

By Rice Ackman

CHAPTER ONE

Carter was stuck in a jam at the 12X junction. He was waiting for the space hobo to show up. The hobo was a man with a purple forehead and a reckless grin. He was the only one brave and reckless men dared to land on Earth.

There were ten about the Solar System—space hobo. They were the only ones for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

12X, in addition, was a junction for three space hobo. They were the only ones for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

The trouble was in the shape of two space hobo. They were the only ones for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

As a rule, no one could make sure no one travelled without a passport, or a space hobo. They were the only ones for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

Green Martians, whose strange properties yet were the only ones for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

Never, the day when the rest of the System had been saving them from the space hobo. They were the only ones for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

But it was no Green Martian the two space guards had caught as time—it was an Earth

man. He might have been a typical twentieth century man. He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

Carter watched the guards drag the straggling man in, with a curious stare, in which there was a hint of the space hobo. They were the only ones for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

Increased life span of two hundred years. They were the only ones for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He said, "How do you know?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He said, "How do you know?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

That's it! He's Griffin, the space hobo. He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He stood up and went over to the guard. He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He said, "How do you know?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He said, "How do you know?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

I didn't know any of our agents were up here. He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He said, "How do you know?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He said, "How do you know?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He said, "How do you know?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He said, "How do you know?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

The Sergeant shrugged, "You know the law, sir. He'll be sent back to Earth on the next ship, then exiled to Luna. What else?"

Carter said, "Sergeant, will you do me a favor?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

He said, "How do you know?" He was the only one for the benefit of weary space travelers. They were the only ones who could stand the heat and the cold.

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[illegible]

At the same time, the "strong" group was
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 was more likely to be in the "strong" group.

[illegible]

It is a fact that the speed of the process is not the same in all cases. It is a fact that the speed of the process is not the same in all cases.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

1. The first group of authors (e.g., [1, 2]) considers the problem of the stability of the motion of a system of particles in the field of a central body. The results of these studies are used in the theory of the motion of celestial bodies.

W. A. S. Fontaine, Esq., at Meriden, Conn., writes me that the Meriden Fair, where we are to exhibit, will probably be the largest fair in the West, and that it will be the largest fair in the West.

$$C = \{x \in \mathbb{R}^n : x \geq 0, \sum_{i=1}^n x_i = 1\} \quad (5.1)$$

[illegible]

I was very tired and a few moments later I fell asleep and did not wake up until the next morning. I was very tired and a few moments later I fell asleep and did not wake up until the next morning. I was very tired and a few moments later I fell asleep and did not wake up until the next morning.

Nancy [redacted] said Rekab
[redacted] it's a public affair (war is
M. [redacted] I want to talk about

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The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) for large values of the parameter ϵ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) can be represented in the form of an asymptotic expansion in powers of ϵ^{-1} . The leading term of this expansion is the solution of the system (2). The next term is the solution of the system (3). The higher order terms are determined by the solutions of the systems (4) and (5). The asymptotic expansion of the solutions of the system (1) is obtained in the form of a series in powers of ϵ^{-1} . The coefficients of this series are determined by the solutions of the systems (2), (3), (4) and (5). The asymptotic expansion of the solutions of the system (1) is obtained in the form of a series in powers of ϵ^{-1} . The coefficients of this series are determined by the solutions of the systems (2), (3), (4) and (5).

[illegible]

He said that he was very happy to see
 the children and that they were all
 very well. He said that he was
 very glad to hear that they were
 all well and that they were all
 very happy.

[illegible]

My answer: Exactly the way you plan to
 present the exchange.

1. The first step is to identify the key components of the system. This includes understanding the hardware, software, and data involved.

[illegible][illegible]

nothing of the change within a few more days. You agree?"

Manley nodded: "I agree."

No time was wasted. The operation to remove the brain eater from Manley's back was performed instantly. I was left in the other room with the two guards, who were drinking at Rekab's invitation. They grew somewhat rowdy as no signs of returning authority came from the lab. The wall was closed again; the scientists were engrossed in the removal of the brain eater.

The Martian guards engaged in a game of Sky Rummy in one corner whilst I wandered about the room inspecting the appointments. It was in this way that I came to the desk—and sat down, ostensibly to read a book, but actually to pen, under cover of the book, a last appeal for help. It was brief, to the point:

"To the space patrol guards, Ganthia, Mars.

Myself and a friend, Manley, are held prisoners in the home of the scientist Rekab. It is Rekab's intention to perform an experiment upon Manley, and later to kill us both. I cannot believe that he has any intention of permitting us to live, either of us.

If you receive this send help at once.

Griffon. X2X3X8.

Space Patrol Agent."

I added fictitious number and the Space Patrol Agent in the hope it would speed them up a little. They were not to know that I had long ago been thrown out of the service because of my brain disease.

Having completed the note I took it casually in my hand and made my way towards the rear window. I looked through the one way glass and into the street, and my eyes rested upon two space guards almost immediately beneath where I now stood. I glanced back at the Martians. They were both engrossed in their game. I pressed the operative button for the window and watched the glass slide gradually upwards. I stopped it at one inch, slid the note out and watched it flutter down to Mars. One of the guards picked it up with a surprised glance upwards, opened it out, and read.

I saw the excitement grow on his features, saw him hand it to his companion, and reach for the small portable microphone which would put him in touch with others of the patrol.

Then I moved hastily away from the window as the sliding panel opened and three men stepped from the interior of the laboratory. The old doctor, Rekab, and Manley!

Manley walked right over to the cabinet with an air of long familiarity and poured a drink for himself. His head was the least bit blood-stained at the nape of the neck, where a small amount of the blood had not been cleaned off.

He finished the Sitch, smacked his lips. Rekab said:

"So the operation was a complete success?"

"Apparently, yes," agreed the new Manley. "My brain feels quite at ease inside your skull, Manley."

"For the present," smiled the new Rekab, and there was something peculiar in the way he smiled. There was also something peculiar in the way Manley, the new Manley, answered his smile. For he answered it with a pistol—a disintegration ray pistol!

He snapped: "It is well that you are all on that side. For you must all die, now my purpose is accomplished. I cannot afford to permit you to live, any of you. Not even you, my esteemed Doctor. I regret the necessity, but it is there . . ."

The Doctor betrayed no emotion at this sudden traitorous move; his features remained calm and impassive, in the manner of the Green Martians. He spoke no word of surprise, nor made any gesture.

Rekab turned the ray upon him: "Nobody will move . . ."

The beam shot out, touched the doctor, swivelled quickly to the two Martian guards who were still seated in the corner staring at their betrayer. All three crumbled in a split second; nothing now remained except three minute piles of ash on the floor.

Rekab turned to us. His eyes smiled cruelly: "As for you two, I fear you must go the same way. I can take no risk of my changed identity being discovered. I would be exiled from Earth. And although you have been valuable to me, Manley, you can no longer be of service."

Manley murmured: "I had expected no less from a man such as you, Rekab."

"Are you not becoming confused?" questioned the man in Manley's body. "I am MANLEY—and you are REKAB. The positions are reversed. It is I, Manley, who intends to dispose of you. It was you, Rekab, who promised me my life."

"If you mean to kill us have done with it," suggested the Green Martian. "The sooner I get my brain, or call it my soul, out of this filthy green carcass of yours, the better."

The gun was raised. Levelled . . .

And the door behind the gunman opened silently . . . a paralytic ray shot from the pistol in the hands of a space guard . . . and the new Manley screamed and dropped his own ray.

The space guards had answered the call for help in time!

And then Rekab's brain, in Manley's body, knew at last why Manley had wandered space, an outcast and hobo. Knew why Manley had made no strenuous objection to the change of

bodies . . . knew the reason for the peculiar smile upon the new Rekab's face.

The space guards gripped him by the shoulder, said: "A good night's work, Manley, I arrest you in the name of the Universal Council, for the murder, two years ago, of Valerin Vutin the First, Grand Duke of Jupiter."

And then, how strenuously Manley swore he was *Rekab's* brain in Manley's body. And how coolly Rekab denied it, said that Manley was raving mad, that he was and always had been Rekab, and that how could anyone possibly believe a brain could be transplanted from one skull to another, and if it were so who had done it?

No; he, Rekab, had captured Manley. He, Rekab, had brought him here to question him. Yes, he had performed a simple operation upon him, to force the truth of who he was from him. He knew he had no right lurking about the city of Ganthia. And at last Manley was dragged away—or rather, Rekab's protesting mind in Manley's body, was dragged away.

And it was ended.

Griffon had been fully revived. He sat now between Zilgos and Carter. Carter was speaking: "And so, Manley, or rather Rekab's brain in Manley's body, tried to escape from his captors and was blasted down by disintegration guns, thereby making it impossible to verify his story. And Manley, in Rekab's body, died recently from a dangerous growth which Rekab had contracted before he evolved the scheme whereby he might change bodies. I have al-

ways been curious about the events surrounding that capture of Manley and his furious pleas that he was really Rekab in Manley's body. Perhaps we might have got the truth had he not tried to escape his guards. Of course, when we came to question you, Griffon, your memory had already let slip the events of the night. But now . . . it won't ever let slip again . . ." He handed Griffon a sleek mirror. Griffon studied his scarred head in it. The purple was already gone—the scar was sealing rapidly.

Carter went on: "If you're ready I have your first assignment *now*—the reason Manley murdered Grand Duke Vutin of Jupiter, was for the Jovian Kellerveit, a priceless gem. The killing took place in the Grand Duke's home, and Manley then hopped a space craft to Mars. Somewhere on Mars he disposed of that gem. That was where he obtained the money he had when you met him. Your first assignment will be to discover where that gem is now!"

Griffon said: "I'm ready."

Carter handed him a card of authority, and a picture of the gem. He shook hands silently.

Griffon, tall and straight once more, cured of the terrible disease, walked out of the room.

Carter watched him go: Zilgos said: "Do you think he can find the gem?"

And Carter smiled: "If anyone can, he can. What's more he doesn't need any disguise . . . everyone knows him as the space hobo . . . and that's the finest disguise he could have."

And Griffon, spinning from Asteroid 12X on liner thirteen, thought so too . . .

THE END.

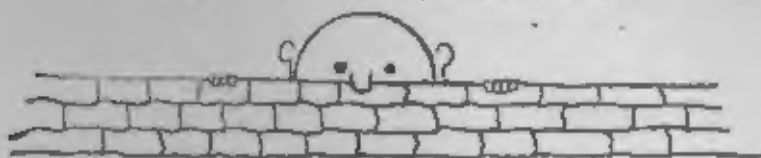
All characters in this book are fictitious.

If the names of actual persons appear it

is a matter of coincidence.

CHAD DAYS

WOT NO LUCK!



SILLY

SHE HAS THE SECRET

Send 6d. for the History and a S.A.E. to H. H. Joan The Wad, Joan's Cottage, Lanivet, Cornwall.
Thousands say:—

In several million booklets you may have read extracts from testimonials received from as far back as 1930. We just take them at random. We possess more than TWELVE THOUSAND unsolicited testimonials, and we know from chance remarks that many who swear by Joan never trouble to report to us. Having so many, we can't possibly publish them all, nor can we constantly be changing our advertisements, and we have been content to keep to those originally published, but such is the immense interest being displayed we thought we would depart from our rule in a small measure and just publish 6 or 7 of the huge number that came in during 1945. Remember, similar testimonials have been coming in unceasingly since 1930.

NEVER WITHOUT MONEY

"I received one of your Histories about three weeks ago and it has brought me luck. Before I received your book I was always without money, but now, thanks to you, I am never without money! (Mrs.) G. O., Glos. 8.10.45."

INCREASE IN WAGES

"... already after one fortnight we have had luck. I won ... sum of £30. ... also have got a £1 per week increase in wages unexpected, so Joan the Wad must be our lucky Star. So please send Jack O'Lantern to make the pair complete. (Mrs.) D. M. Kirkgate, Leeds. 19.11.45."

LOST HIS JOAN—LOST HIS LUCK

"Please let me know how much to send for Joan the Wad and Jack O'Lantern. I had them both in 1931, but somehow lost them in hospital two years ago. I can honestly say that since losing them nothing has seemed to go right with me. I know what good luck Joan can bring by honest facts I have really experienced. ... I certainly know that Joan the Wad is more than a lucky charm. Mr. E. E. S. Liphook, Hants. 10.11.45."

HOMELESS

LOOKED FOR A HOUSE FOR FOUR YEARS—Got Joan, Got a House, Got a job as well.

"Believe it or not, things have taken an astonishing change for the better since the day I received Joan—more than I have dared hope for before. I am being discharged from Services, Oct. 22nd. My family are homeless and I couldn't take a job. But now I have offered me a job with a cottage and good wages, one of my favourite jobs, tractor driving. Please note I have been after a house for just on four years. G. S., Army Fire Service, Slough. 0.10.45."

MARRIED A MILLIONAIRE

"... two of my friends have won £500 each since receiving your mascots, and another has married an American millionaire. ... Please forward me one Joan the Wad and one Jack O'Lantern. C. E. Levenshulme. 2.11.45."

BETTER JOB, MORE MONEY, LESS HOURS, IMPROVED HEALTH

"My dear Joan ... She has brought me continual good luck and her influence spreads to every sphere ... I have got a much better job ... greater wages ... less working hours ... and my health has greatly improved. I have always been a lonely kind of person, but ... a friend of the opposite sex, she is also lonely ... great opportunity for comradeship offered. So you see how the influence of Joan works. My pockets have always been full and I have had many wishes and desires fulfilled ... I would not part with Joan for her weight in gold, she is much too valuable in every way. Her powers extend all over the world, and she works unceasingly for the full benefit of her friends and adherents. She rides in my pocket day and night and never leaves me. ... A. H., Leeds, 9. 2.11.45."

All you have to do is to send a 6d. stamp and a stamped addressed envelope for the history to:

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